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Technical Details

Genre Comedy
Type Short Film
Runtime 00:02:40
Country Australia
Prod. Year 2022
Language English
Ratio 16mm 1.66:1

Production

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Short Synopsis

A fashion-forward model questions his self-image when he crosses paths with the “cooler” version of himself on a photoshoot.

Long Synopsis

THE GUY rocks up at a photoshoot feeling like the king of the world. He’s in the zone; this is his space. On his way across the room to meet the stylist he is stopped in his tracks when he sees THE COOLGUY enter the room and begin walking in his direction.

A sea of anxious thoughts flow through the Guy’s head as he compares himself to the Coolguy, concluding that the Coolguy is everything he wants to be. As the Guy and the Coolguy cross paths, the Guy attempts to make a “cool” comment but ultimately embarrasses himself.

Gritting his teeth, he soldiers on and keeps walking until his curiosity gets the best of him, and he looks back toward the Coolguy, only to realise that the Coolguy seemed to not have even noticed him.

Cutting to the climactic shot of the Coolguy moments later, we see the Coolguy going through the exact same thought process as the Guy. He turns back to look at the Guy, only to realise that the Guy seemed to not have even noticed him. The two go on, never realising just how perfect they could have been for one another.



About the production

Rareamazing acknowledges the Wurundjeri People as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gathered for this production. We pay our respect to their elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

The FILM

Coolguy is a short film about self image set in the world of fashion. Directed by Franco-Australian couple Nicky & Z (Craftsman, MIFF Official Selection 2021) and photographed on 16mm film by Jesse Gohier-Fleet (Kids on Fire, MIFF Official Selection 2019); Coolguy stars Melbourne based models Tobias Mambwe and Luis Burns in their first narrative-fiction film appearances.

As an energetic comedy, the film uses classic fashion tropes like paparazzi style imagery and a 16mm fashion-film aesthetic to blend into the fashion landscape.

The FASHION

As a story taking place in the world of fashion, the look of the two characters was one of the most important elements of the production. The fashion in Coolguy is what incites the drama, the comedy and ultimately the climax of the story.

Production Designer Zeïna Thiboult collaborated with Melbourne stylist Sebastian Supel and Aoyama Archive to design an aesthetic for the characters. Inspired by modern high-fashion trends, the final look of the two main characters represents their androgynous and attentionate mindsets.

The PRODUCTION

Neither Tobias Mambwe or co-star Luis Burns had played in a live-action film before, but as they both have a background as models, they were cast based on their familiarity with the fashion world. The filmmakers felt that being a film about fashion, it was fitting to hire models rather than actors.

The SET

The film was shot on location in Collingwood, Australia at the head office of HoMie Creative. The script originally called for a photography studio as the primary location, however upon scouting the studio at HoMie Creative, Nicky & Z discovered a large ambiently lit vehicle storage space in the room next door and adapted the setting of the film to fit the space.

The EDIT

With inspirations like the photoshoot scene in Lost in Translation and the home-DJ scenes in Millenium Mambo, Editor Nicky Murphy set the goal early on to have the film capture the energy of the art world in 90s/2000s movies. A large part of this energy comes from the sonic aspects of these films.

With that in mind, Coolguy was edited in quite an unusual manner. The score and the voiceover were edited first while the 16mm film was still being developed. This meant that those audio segments were edited very rhythmically as there was no imagery to cut to.

Once the negatives came back from the lab, those scans were dropped into the sequence, giving the music and the sound effects the priority in the edit, and the first cut of the film was finished within 2 days.

Interview

Nicky Murphy & Zeina Thiboult (Directors)

What inspired the story? *(Nicky)*

Well I spent a year writing a feature and it really burnt me out, so much so that I eventually ended up abandoning the project to write something simple (3 pages or less). I started by looking at small moments in my day to day life that I could write about, as opposed to long-form journeys. I don't remember the particular event that this script was based on, but it basically represents a thought process that I experience almost every day, and I'm sure I'm not alone on that, so when I realised that this anxiety could make for a funny story, the rest of it came pretty organically.

How was fashion used to serve the story? *(Zeina)*

Fashion is the heart of this film. The characters' insecurities come from their perception of self, which all goes back to the way they dress. At its core, the fashion in Coolguy works as a facade for the characters to hide behind. I think that's what I love about the film, it's all about the way we control our insecurities through fashion; with a daring outfit, one can create the illusion of confidence.

As far as the look goes, we dressed the extras (and the set) in quite neutral colours so that the heroes would pop out. The GUY is dressed in a relatively reserved manner. He wears jewellery and vintage couture clothing. The idea here was that when he meets the COOLGUY, his whole world is torn to shreds, purely based on the Coolguy's outfit. The Coolguy is the more expensive version of the Guy; he's like the Guy on steroids. His nails are painted, he's more androgynous and his couture clothing is even more exclusive than the Guy's. In general, the Coolguy is also dressed more colourfully than the Guy. This doesn't necessarily mean he is more confident than the Guy, but it more so refers to the fact that he has more to hide than the Guy does, which only really becomes evident in the film's climax.

What was behind the choice to shoot on 16mm? *(Nicky)*

There were a few considerations here. I guess first and foremost, whether you want to admit it or not; film is just the shit. I mean digital serves a purpose, and it does a pretty damn good job, but something about the way highlights and skin tones are rendered on film is just so nice to look at.

Zeina and myself had never shot on 16mm before, and we didn't have the budget to do so on anything too grand in scale, so a 3 page script in one location with minimal on screen dialogue was essentially the perfect project to ease us into the process. Beyond that, we wanted this to visually feel like a "fashion film", and these days more and more of the content being made in that world is shot on super 8 or super 16.

We shot our last film (Craftsman, 2020) on digital, and we used vintage m42 photography lenses to do our best to soften the image and emulate a filmic look however through making Coolguy what I learnt about shooting on film is that it isn't just the look of the medium that makes the difference in the end product, it's about the work ethic associated with it. People work harder, rehearsals get tighter and everything is more considered when you're shooting on a finite physical format like 16mm. Plus a lot of time is saved on set when you don't have playback, which feels very liberating. You ask the DP if the take went well technically, you take their word for it and you move onto the next setup.

Crew

Directed / Produced by	Nicky & Z
Screenplay	Nicky Murphy
Production Design	Zeïna Thibout
1st Assistant Director	Jonathan Nguyen
2nd Assistant Director	Charlie Poustie
Post Production	Nicky Murphy
Cinematographer	Jesse Gohier-Fleet
1st Assistant Camera	Anthony Taranto
2nd Assistant Camera	Daniel Mudrinic
Gaffer	Jordan Dautovic
Still Photographer	Charlie Hawks
Set Design	Henry King
Location Manager	Shelbie Lloyd
Wardrobe	Aoyama Archive
Floristry	Kayla Moon
Makeup	Moochi
Music Supervisor	Liam Alexander
Graphic Design	Sam Donaldson

Cast

THE GUY	Tobias Mambwe
THE COOLGUY	Luis Burns
THE PHOTOGRAPHER	Charlie Hawks
THE STYLIST	Tessa Natalie
THE MODEL	Louise Hill
THE FLORIST	Kayla Moon
EXTRA	Justyn Burrows
EXTRA	Charlie Poustie
EXTRA	Yasmine Sharaf
EXTRA	Henry King
EXTRA	Jonathan Nguyen
EXTRA	Grace Ruby
EXTRA	Monikha
EXTRA	Bo Kok





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